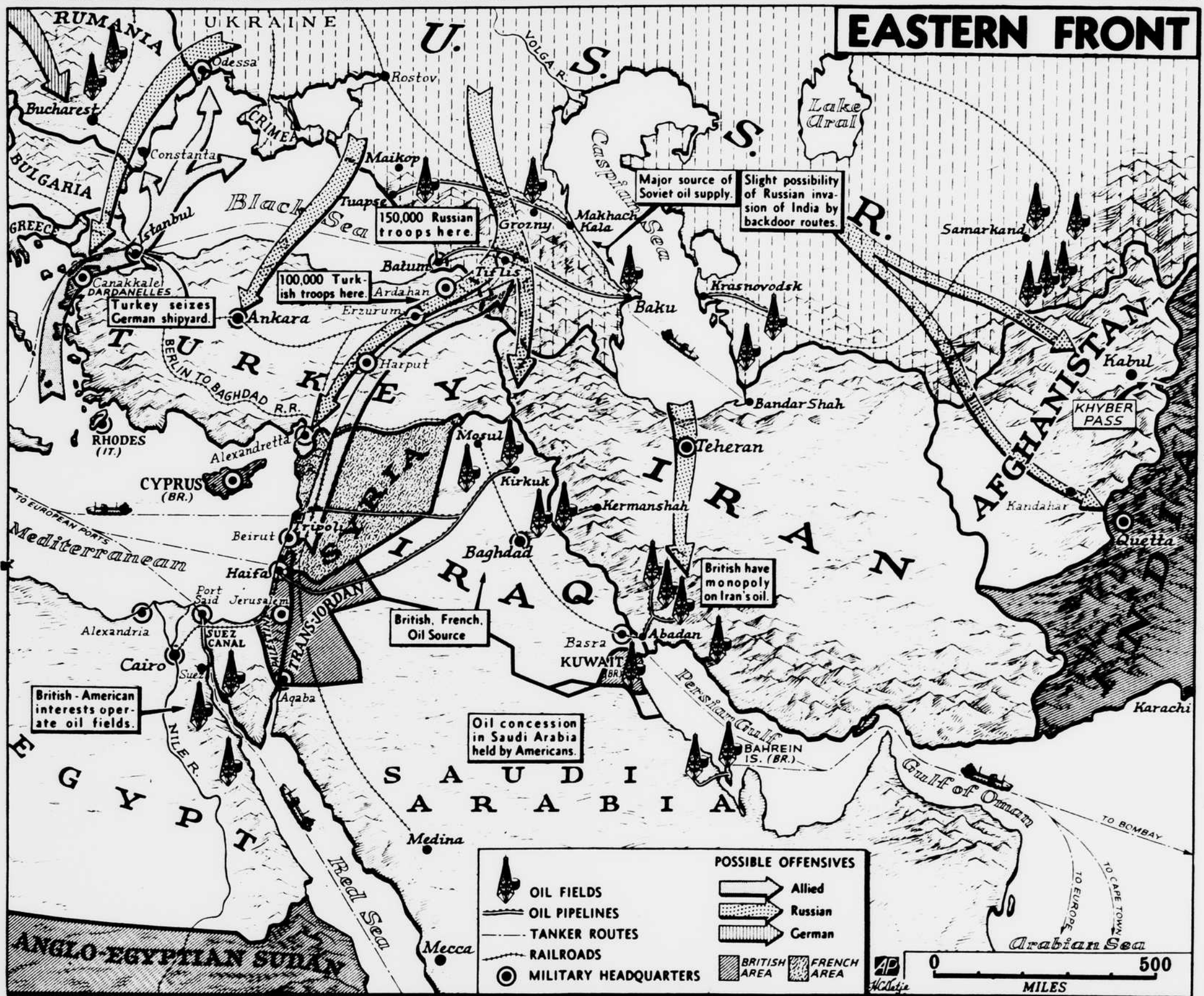


12. OIL AND ARMIES PUT NEAR EAST ON THE SPOT



Dardanelles Again Become Key To Military Moves In The East



TO FIGHT Russia, help Rumania, or strike Germany through her backdoor, the Allies need control of this passageway. That's why they were so glad to sign up Turkey, who was permitted to re-fortify the straits in 1936. Military men say they are

probably impregnable. They were in 1915, too, when the Allies tried to break through to help Russia. Under the Allied-Turkish treaty, Turkey need not fight Russia, but she probably would if the Soviet moved to secure control of this vital route.

WITH war alarms ringing through the Balkans, it was inevitable that they should ring through the Near East. For the Near East, too, is rich in oil, and it, too, provides routes for one belligerent to strike at another.

The possibility of an eastern front struck the world suddenly in February, when Turkey seized a German shipyard at Istanbul, and 30,000 Australian and New Zealand troops landed at Suez.

But those events were just two of the many stemming from the Allied-Turkish alliance signed October 19 after Turkey and Russia failed to come to terms. The new alliance placed Germany's old partner with Britain and France if war hit the Mediterranean area.

The arrival of the Anzacs put the Allies' Near Eastern forces around the three-quarters-of-a-million mark. The Turks can put more than a million troops in the field. Military men said offensives by either side probably would center on the oil fields and the Dardanelles.

Russia gets most of her oil from the Baku region, just over the border from Turkey, and Germany has been counting on getting some of it. England gets almost a third of her imports from the other fields shown; and France almost a half.